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REUNITED AND HOME

'I always wanted to bring my husband home and I never thought I would'



WELCOME: Bryce Hunapo is applauded as he arrives at his home in Merivale.

by Michele McPherson
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Tears of joy streamed at every turn as Bryce Hunapo and his family were welcomed home yesterday by the team of volunteers who completed a makeover of their Merivale house.

Surrounded by his whanau, Mr Hunapo was wheeled down the driveway of the Hampton Terrace home he and wife Veronica built 27 years ago.

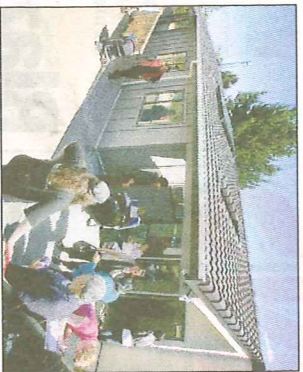
Five and a half years ago the couple moved to Brisbane where illness meant Mr Hunapo required resthome care, separating him from his wife and family.

Yesterday, thanks to the Makeover Project — Merivale, the second makeover led by Mount Maunganui's Mosaic Church, the Hunapos were re-united and at home.

Starting on October 1, volunteers spent 10 days stripping the house back to its bones, adding a room and re-building the damp, rundown interior.

Project manager Joel Milgate said about 5000 man hours — every one unpaid — had gone into the makeover, estimated to be worth about \$135,000.

Teams of volunteers, ranging from 30 to 70 people a day, worked from about 8am to about midnight to have the house completed by 1pm yesterday. Mr Milgate said he was shattered but beamed at the sight of a family reunited.



HARD YARDS: Volunteers worked round the clock to change the Hunapo family home.

PICTURE / 11009MM6380P

"It was amazing, just to see them reconnect with their piece of land. You always know when you're home."

Mr Milgate said a combination of resources had made the project a reality.

"It's only possible because 80-plus companies have said 'we can't build you a house, but we can give you this.'"

The Hunapos' daughter, Rhismanda "Babe" Hunapo, 29, was nominated for the makeover by the Merivale Community Centre where she works as a volunteer. She and her four children were living in the home before the makeover.

After 10 days in Australia helping her parents prepare for the move, Miss Hunapo said she and her family had been preparing for a cry when they arrived at their

new home.

"Just coming down the driveway, we could see all the whole family would have just been happy for him (Mr Hunapo) to have a floor and a ramp for him to come home to," she said.

The renovation added one bedroom and a separate toilet and bathroom, as well as making the home wheelchair-accessible, adding a big deck and landscaping.

New curtains, furnishings and ornaments were used to decorate the home.

Tauranga MP Simon Bridges said the makeover project was an example of whanau and community taking responsibility for a need that had been seen.

As she received the keys to her renovated home Mrs Hunapo said a dream had been realised.

"I always wanted to bring my husband home and I never thought I would," she said. "It's another journey that we'll have to start, but you have made it possible."

Other family had come from Tokoroa and Hamilton, including Mr Hunapo's eldest brother, 62, who described the new home as "atahaha", meaning beautiful.

"You never think it will happen so close to you, then all of a sudden, bang, it does."

Mr Milgate was adamant the next makeover would be better still. "You can't go backwards."

NEW ROUTE: Morning traffic moved slowly as people adjusted to the new flyover on to



by John Cousins
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Tauranga's Harbour Link flyover survived its first encounter with rush-hour traffic this morning without any real traffic snarl-ups.

Project manager Kevin Reid said there were a few queues, particularly on the off-ramp down to Chapel St because of the closure of the link to Dive Cres, but generally things were pretty good.

"It's going as well as it could do ... it will take a few days."

He said traffic was moving more slowly coming into town across the bridge as people familiarised themselves with the flyover.

Mr Reid said there would not be any kneejerk reactions unless there was a really major problem. By tomorrow people would be getting used to the new roading layout.

He expected the pressure on the Chapel St off-ramp to ease as commuters worked out different ways to reach their work, such as continuing down the flyover to



NO TROUBLE: Traffic appeared to be flowing fine Maunganui.

Taktimu Drive and turning left into Elizabeth St.

Mobil Causeway service station noted things looked to be going well, particularly for motorists coming from Negatai Rd and heading to the Mount. They now had their own on-ramp up to the flyover and did not need to wait for their chance at the Chapel St lights to turn into Marsh St.

Public to decide: Pay more

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There needs to be a balance between cutting ACC entitlements and increasing levies, Prime Minister John Key says.

ACC's annual report to June 2009 last Friday recorded that its liability had ballooned by \$4.8 billion, driven by increased claims, declining rehabilitation and an increase in the assessments of costs.

ACC chairman John Judge said levies would need to rise as the scheme's claim liability — the future cost of existing claims — was \$23.8 billion.

Current net assets, which ACC uses to cover future costs, were \$11 billion, leaving a \$12.8 billion

gap. Mr Judge said the future of the scheme was at risk.

Mr Key said the public needed



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Now that's different...

A German hospital says a woman has given birth to a healthy baby despite having been in a coma for the last 22 weeks of her pregnancy.

Bavaria's Erlangen University

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